DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 309 352 CG 021 813

AUTHOR Sesney, John
TITLE Substance Use and Abuse in the Rural Inland Northwest.
SPONS AGENCY Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE 27 Apr 89
GRANT G00-8720244
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Psychological Association (69th, Reno, NV, April 26-30, 1989). For related documents, see CG 021 811-815.
PUB TYPE Statistical Data (110) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Drinking; *High School Students; *Incidence; *Junior High School Students; *Rural Schools; Rural Youth; Secondary Education; Student Attitudes; *Substance Abuse
IDENTIFIERS *United States (Northwest)

ABSTRACT

Alcohol and drug use among youth has been of increased concern to educators, politicians, parents, and students in the past few years. The purpose of this study was to examine the incidence and use of alcohol and drugs in the rural region of northern Idaho and eastern Washington state. A questionnaire was designed to collect demographic information and a variety of opinions, attitudes, and values regarding alcohol and drug use. In addition to a student questionnaire, a parental and school personnel form was developed to assess the same content areas. The instrument was administered to 5,435 junior and high school students. The incidence of drug and alcohol use was compared to national averages. Use levels of drugs in the rural Northwest were generally below national averages. Alcohol was reported to be the most used drug, with only 17.3% of high school seniors surveyed reporting that they never used alcohol. Although 83% of the respondents reported never using marijuana, 3% said they used marijuana daily. Although marijuana, tobacco, and hard drug use appeared to be lower than national averages, alcohol use was similar to the national average, with 82.7% of seniors reporting having tried alcohol. Hopefully, the data will be of use for particular districts and communities as they develop specific alcohol and drug education curricula. (ABL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED309352

SCOPE OF INTEREST NOTICE

The ERIC Facility has assigned this document for processing to:

In our judgment, this document is also of interest to the Clearinghouses noted to the right. Indexing should reflect their special points of view.

Substance Use and Abuse in the Rural Inland Northwest

John Sesney, Ph.D.

Paper presented at Western Psychological and Rocky Mountain Association Meeting in Reno, Nevada, April 27, 1989

Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Western Psychological Association, Reno, Nevada, April 30, 1989. This research was supported by a grant from the U.S.Department of Education (Grant No. G00 8720244).

CE 021813

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

John Sesney

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

For reprints contact author at Bay De Noc Health Center, Doctors Park, Escanaba, Michigan 49829

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Substance Use and Abuse in the Rural Inland Northwest
John Sesney, Ph.D.
Revised April 14, 1989

Alcohol and drug use among the youth of our nation has been of increased concern to educators, politicians, parents and students in the past few years. There has been renewed national interest and commitment toward dealing with drug problems and several studies have been conducted to determine the incidence of drug use. Special interest has been directed at the prevalences in various population centers, geographical locations, and possible effects of social-cultural and economic variables upon usage patterns.

In 1987, Lewis Clark State College in Lewiston, Idaho was awarded a grant by the U.S. Department of Education to conduct a Drug Education Infusion Project for public schools. The first major component of this project was to design and administer a comprehensive needs assessment to 23 small/rural school districts (enrollment range 159-4,844) in the northern Idaho and eastern Washington state areas. Agriculture, forestry and tourism are the primary economies in an area of 13,133 square miles with 91,246 people. The purpose of this study was to examine the incidence and use of alcohol and drugs in the region so that efforts could ultimately be directed toward developing inservice workshops and materials for teachers to specifically address the alcohol and drug education needs of particular districts. Other unique objectives of the grant were to infuse alcohol and drug information into the regular school curriculum and to involve community organizations in promoting public awareness toward the grant and to eventually establish a Regional Center to continue on-going support.

Methods

The project staff surveyed several needs assessment instruments and designed a 53 item questionnaire which collected demographic information and a variety of opinions, attitudes, and values regarding alcohol and drug use. In addition to the student questionnaire, a parental and school personnel form was developed to assess the same content areas. The instrument was field tested with small samples of representative students and was eventually administered to 5,435 junior and senior high school students over a 3 month period in Spring, 1988.

Results

The overall results of the study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Self-Reported Drug Use Levels
Regional Percentages

Drug	Never Used	Have Tried	Monthly Use	Weekly Use	Daily Use
Alcohol	30.2	68.8	34.6	20.1	2.7
Tobacco	65.5	34.5	17.9	15.7	12.5
Marijuana	82.7	17.3	7.6	5.1	2.4
Any Hard Drug	78.5	21.5	6.1	3.5	1.8

*Any hard drug includes amphetamines, tranquilizers, psychedelics, heroin, cocaine, and PCP.

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has collected data on drug use and related attitudes of America's high school seniors from 1975 through 1986. The research is conducted by the University of Michigan's Institute of Social Research. The NIDA survey was based upon a sample of 15,200 high school seniors. Their results in comparison to the present study are as follows:

Table 2
Comparison of NIDA and Rural Inland Northwest Drug Use

Drug	Never Used	Have Tried	Monthly Use	Daily Use
Alcohol				
NIDA	8.7	91.3	65.3	4.8
RINW	17.3	82.7	56.7	4.4
Marijuana				
NIDA	49.1	50.9	23.4	4.0
RINW	73.8	26.2	13.0	4.6
Tobacco				
NIDA	32.4	67.6	29.6	18.7
RINW	55.9	44.1	29.8	22.6

The frequency and categorization of hard drug use was measured somewhat differently in NIDA survey compared the RINW study, however, NIDA reports that 38% of all seniors have used an illicit drug other than marijuana compared to 23.4% of the RINW senior students who had tried an illicit drug.

The NIDA study found that the initiation of daily smoking most often occurs in grades 7 through 9 with rather little further initiation after high school (although a number of light smokers make the transition to heavy smoking in the first two years after high school). Cigarette smoking appears to have a dramatic "cohort effect", in that, if a class cohort establishes an unusually high rate of smoking at an early age relative to other cohorts, it is likely to remain high throughout the life cycle. This phenomena may be represented in the RINW data as only 44.1% have tried tobacco compared to 67.6% in the NIDA sample, but 29.8% smoked monthly which was strikingly similar to the 29.6% figure in the NIDA study. The RINW study indicated an increasing number of students who smoked as they proceeded through the grades.

Table 3
Self-Reported Tobacco Use Levels
Regional Percentages by Grade Level

Grade Level	Never Used	Have Tried	Monthly Use	Daily Used
7th Grade	74.6	25.4	7.3	4.4
8th Grade	71.1	28.9	10.7	6.9
9th Grade	67.1	32.9	15.2	10.0
10th Grade	64.8	35.2	18.5	12.2
11th Grade	60.6	39.4	24.4	17.7
12th Grade	55.9	44.1	29.8	22.6

Data regarding marijuana use is presented in Table 4. The RINW study posed frequency use differently by asking about weekly use instead of daily use, but there was an increasing trend in weekly use from 1.9% in 7th grade to 9.5% in 12th grade. NIDA reports that the annual prevalence of marijuana use among high school seniors in the U.S. was 39% in 1986 having fell from a high of 51% in 1979. At least 26.2% 12th graders in the present study reported "having tried" marijuana. National studies indicate frequent use of marijuana has shown a dramatic decline, in 1978, 37% of senior students admitted to having smoked marijuana within the previous 30 days,while in 1986, the figure was down to 23%. The number of daily users has decreased from almost 11% in 1978 to 4% in 1986.

Table 4
Self-Reported Marijuana Use Levels
Regional Percentages by Grade levels

Grade Level	Never Used	Have Tried	Monthly Use	Weekly Use
7th Grade	94.6	5.4	2.2	1.9
8th Grade	88.9	11.1	3.7	2.2
9th Grade	83.1	16.9	8.4	5.3
10th Grade	79.3	20.7	7.4	5.0
11th Grade	76.7	23.3	11.0	6.9
12th Grade	73.8	26.2	13.0	9.5

The RINW data regarding alcohol use is presented in Table 5. These data appear to be slightly different from the national data as cited by NIDA. Please recall that approximately 91% in the NIDA report having tried alcohol compared to approximately 83% of our sample. Since 1980, the monthly prevalence of alcohol use among seniors has gradually declined, from 72% in 1980 to 65% in 1986 compared to 56.7% in the RINW sample. NIDA reports daily use declined from a peak of 6.9% in 1979 to 4.8% in 1984 and the prevalence of five or more drinks in a row during the prior two-week interval fell from 41% in 1983 to 37% in 1985. Although the time period being measured is somewhat different between the NIDA measures and the present study, it appears that significant numbers of RINW seniors-82.7% have tried alcohol and over one-half 56.7% report using alcohol on a monthly basis and over one-third, 38.5% use it weekly.

Table 5
Self-Reported Alcohol Use Levels
Regional Percentages by Grade levels

Grade Level	Never Used	Have Tried	Monthly Use	Weekly Use
7th Grade	46.4	53.6	10.3	3.6
8th Grade	40.9	59.1	19.7	9.9
9th Grade	28.2	71.8	33.7	18.7
10th Grade	25.6	74.4	37.6	18.5
11th Grade	19.8	80.2	50.6	31.2
12th Grade	17.3	82.7	56.7	38.5

The RINW data on hard drugs is presented in Table 6. The 1986 NIDA report stated that when you compare specific types of drugs we find that 16.9% of high school seniors had used cocaine compared to 4.1% in the RINW sample; in the NIDA sample 9.7% had used hallucinogens compared to 5.5% in the RINW sample; and 1.1% of the NIDA sample had used heroin compared to a surprisingly high 4.6% of the RINW total sample across grades 7 through 12. Finally, 10.9% had used tranquilizers in the NIDA sample compared to 6.0% in the RINW sample. In general, the data collected in this study reported lower specific incidences of use, with the exception of heroin.

Table 6
Self-Reported Hard Drug Levels
Regional Percentages by Grade levels

Grade Level	Never Used	Have Tried	Monthly Use	Weekly Use
7th Grade	82.6	17.4	4.0	2.6
8th Grade	82.4	17.6	5.0	3.1
9th Grade	78.3	21.7	6.1	4.5
10th Grade	79.9	20.1	6.1	3.2
11th Grade	78.0	21.5	7.3	4.6
12th Grade	76.6	23.4	8.0	3.3

Conclusion

Use levels of drugs in the rural inland Northwest are generally below national averages, with alcohol being the most used drug considering that only 17.3% of high school seniors report never using it. Although 83% of the respondents have never used marijuana, 3% use it at least once a day. On the average, users started at age 14. 45% feel that marijuana would be "easy" to obtain, and the perception of 24% of the respondents is that "many" adults in their community are marijuana users.

Although the marijuana, tobacco, and hard drug use levels of the RINW sample appear to be less than the national averages for junior and high school students, the alcohol use levels appear to be markedly similar with 82.7% of RINW seniors having tried alcohol compared to 91.3% of high school seniors.

So, overall incidence of alcohol and drug use in the RINW does not appear to be as high as national data-but, one still must be concerned when it appears that 34.6% of the 7th through 12 graders use alcohol monthly, 12.5% of the same sample use tobacco daily, and 21.5% have tried hard drugs. Hopefully, the data will be of use for particular districts and communities as they develop specific alcohol and drug education curricula.

References

National Trends in Drug Use and Related Factors among American High School Students and Young Adults, 1975-1986. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Sanders, Joe M. Identifying Substance Abuse in Adolescents. Postgraduate Medicine. Vol. 84, No. 1, July, 1988. pp.. 123-136.